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INFO RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 000496

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SUBJECT: BAGHDAD PROVINCIAL COUNCIL MEMBERS PREDICTS GREATER FEMALE REPRESENTATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

REF: BAGHDAD 262

Classified By: POLITICAL COUNSELOR ROBERT S. FORD FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (C) Baghdad Provincial Council member and Sadr City resident Fatima Hassan al-Muqaddadi told PolOff in a February 12 meeting that her Dawa Party would like to see 25 percent of provincial and local government representatives be female. Other political parties, she said, are actively recruiting educated women to run for office. She told PolOff she hopes women will be able to increase their representation in local governments to a proportion that gives them a greater voice in determining the future of their communities.

¶2. (C) Al-Muqaddadi said she feels so strongly about female representation in local governments that she has sponsored a resolution in the Baghdad Provincial Council. According to the resolution, if the Provincial Council Chair is a male, then one of the two Deputy Provincial Council Chairs should be a woman. This resolution was passed and will take effect after the next provincial council elections.

¶3. (C) Comment: Al Muqaddadi's positive outlook for the future of political women stands in sharp contrast to what some other female politicians from Sadr City have told us (reftel). That she convinced a majority of her colleagues on the provincial council to vote for a resolution aimed at achieving greater representation for women shows that politicians are willing to support women's rights, at least publicly. End Comment.

KHALILZAD